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CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 SHANGHAI 000647

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STATE FOR EAP/CM
STATE PASS TO DEPT OF EDUCATION - ROBIN GILCHRIST

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/4/2017

TAGS: PGOV SOCI PREL CH

SUBJECT: EDUCATION SECRETARY SPELLINGS' MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER YANG JIECHI

CLASSIFIED BY: Kenneth Jarrett, Consul General, U.S. Consulate , Shanghai .

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. On October 2, the U.S. Special Olympics Delegation, headed by Education Secretary Margaret Spellings, met with Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi. Secretary Spellings expressed appreciation for China's support for the Special Olympics and delivered a letter from President Bush to President Hu congratulating China on hosting the summer games in Shanghai.

FM Yang acknowledged the importance of supporting people with intellectual disabilities and said the Special Olympics provides a good opportunity for the two countries to learn from each other. He acknowledged U.S. contributions to the birth and growth of the Special Olympics movement. FM Yang urged that more be done to facilitate youth exchanges, expand science and technology cooperation, and increase cultural exchanges and language training. This would help build a solid social foundation for the sustained and stable development of U.S.-China relations. End Summary.

Support for Special Olympics

¶2. (SBU) Education Secretary Spellings, accompanied by the Ambassador and other members of the U.S. Special Olympics Delegation, met with FM Yang Jiechi on October 2. (See list of participants in para 8.) FM Yang thanked the United States for sending such a high-level and diverse delegation to the Special Olympics, which he described as a symbol of the tremendous importance President Bush and the First Lady attach to the games.

¶3. (C) Secretary Spellings expressed appreciation for China's efforts in hosting the games. She said that the delegation, the first ever Presidential-level delegation named for the Special Olympics, is thrilled to be in China. She described a visit earlier that day to a "Sunshine Home" in Shanghai, a facility which attends to the needs and well-being of children with intellectual disabilities. The delegation enjoyed observing China's approach to supporting people with intellectual disabilities. Yang noted that President Hu, currently in Shanghai for the opening ceremony, had also visited a "Sunshine Home." President Hu also met with athletes and talked to them and even served as a referee in a game of tug-of-war. Secretary Spellings delivered a letter from President Bush to President Hu congratulating China for hosting the summer games in Shanghai.

FM Yang expressed appreciation for the important letter, which he promised to deliver promptly to President Hu.

¶4. (SBU) FM Yang recognized U.S. contributions to the birth and growth of the Special Olympics movement. Like the United States, China also places great importance on helping people with intellectual disabilities. China believes that such people are an important part of society and can also make valuable contributions to society. The Special Olympics provide a good occasion to work with other countries to find more opportunities to improve the lives of those with intellectual disabilities. Yang added that China is confident that with the support of people from all walks of life, the Shanghai games will be an excellent event. The games encapsulate the ideal of building a harmonious society.

Expand Educational Exchanges

¶5. (SBU) FM Yang noted Secretary Spellings November 2006 visit to Beijing and her contributions to promoting educational exchange and cooperation. He urged that more be done to facilitate youth exchanges, increase cooperation in the field of science and technology, and expand cultural exchanges and language training. Increasing exchanges between young people will build a solid social foundation for the sustained and stable development of U.S.-China relations. Yang noted that during President Hu's last trip to the United States he invited 100 students and faculty from Yale University to China. He then personally met with the delegation in Beijing. FM Yang encouraged increased cooperation in the science and technology field. With globalization comes a need to increase the number of technology and scientific specialists. China is striving to become an innovation based society and has set long-term guidelines to turn itself into a high-tech country.

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¶6. (SBU) Yang said that China is also making efforts to increase cultural exchanges and language training. Currently more than one-third of China's overseas students are in the United States, citing a figure of 80,000. He said there were currently 10,000 U.S. students in China and more than 20 Confucian Institutes in the United States. China provides these institutes with faculty, textbooks and equipment to support language training. He joked that the Chinese language is not a difficult language since one-fifth of the world's population speaks it. He added that China looks forward to continued support from the United States for English language training. He told Secretary Spellings to rest assured that the number of people in China who speak English with an American accent now outnumbers those who speak with his British accent, acquired during his student days in the UK. He concluded that there is great potential for expanding educational exchanges and developing the overall relationship. He thanked Secretary Spellings for her role in facilitating student visa issuance for Chinese students and called for stronger cooperation between China's Ministry of Education and U.S. Department of Education to improve relations between the United States and China.

¶7. (SBU) Secretary Spellings expressed delight that the U.S.-China relationship is flourishing on the cultural and educational level. Student visa numbers have now returned to pre-9/11 levels and the United States is the number two destination for Chinese students. China is the ninth most popular destination for U.S. students and interest is growing quickly. In a globalized world there is a great need for the United States and China to understand each other better. She added that the United States is also interested in strengthening the study of science and technology and math. In that regard, the President just signed legislation to give more support to exchanges and improve the study of science and technology. She agreed with FM Yang that there are many areas ripe for continued cooperation and that this would benefit both nations.

¶8. (U) Participants:

U.S. Side: Secretary Spellings, Ambassador Randt, Mr. Ernie Banks, Ms. Lynn Fuchs, Mr. John Hager, Ms. Michelle Kwan, Ms. Jennifer Polk Wardlow, CG Jarrett, Ms. Robin Gilchrist (Dept of Education), Ambassador Special Assistant Michael Crain, notetaker Titi Baccam and interpreter Jim Brown.

PRC Side: FM Yang Jiechi, Assistant VM He Yafei, DG Liu Jieyi, DG WU Hailong, DG Liu Jianchao, and notetakers.

¶9. (U) This message was cleared by Secretary Spellings' delegation.

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